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STATE FOR OES/OA BALTON, PHELPS, COMMERCE FOR NOAA MEDINA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2020
TAGS: [EFIS](#) [SENV](#) [EWWT](#) [AS](#)
SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY -- JAPANESE WHALING SHIP COLLIDES
WITH, SINKS SEA SHEPHERD BOAT

REF: 09 CANBERRA 1099

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Edgard Kagan, Reasons 1.4(b)
(d).

CORRECTED COPY -- ADDED CORRECT CAPTION

11. (SBU) A Japanese whaling vessel collided with and sank a Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) vessel, the Ady Gil, on January 6. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) confirmed media reports that the Gil, a 79-foot New Zealand-flagged vessel, sank following a collision with a Japanese vessel (reportedly the Shonan Maru) with six persons aboard. No one was injured and no AMCITS were involved. All six were transferred to the Bob Barker, another SSCS vessel. The sinking took place 1300 nm south of Tasmania in Australia's search and rescue zone (location 64 degrees, 03 minutes South; 143 degrees, 10 minutes East). No SAR response by Australia was required. No official statement has been issued as of close of business local time, but we expect the GOA to respond either tonight or early tomorrow. Although a formal investigation will be the responsibility of the flag state, New Zealand, AMSA told us they will assist GONZ authorities as needed in any investigation.

12. (C/NF) This sinking, a major escalation of the confrontation over whaling in the Southern Ocean, will be the major media item over the next few days. It will increase public and opposition pressure on the government to more actively confront Japan, monitor whaling and protest operations in the Australian search and rescue zone, and to investigate the actions of both Japan and the SSCS. It contravenes Australia's calls for maximum consideration of safety in these activities and, if Japan is at fault, will further chill Australia's diplomatic engagement on whaling.

13. (U) Post will report any additional steps or statements by Australia as they develop.

CLUNE